How to be Successful in GCSE English 5+

Miss Talbot
(English Curriculum Team Lead)
atalbot@celtrust.org

September 2024

Key Questions

- ✓ What **important information** should we know about the **English GCSE exams**?
- ✓ How does **Poltair School** prepare students for their English exams?
- ✓ How can we **support students at home** to help them succeed in their English exams?

GCSE English Language

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (80 marks)

One fiction text

Section A: Four reading questions

Section B: One creative writing task (choice of two tasks)

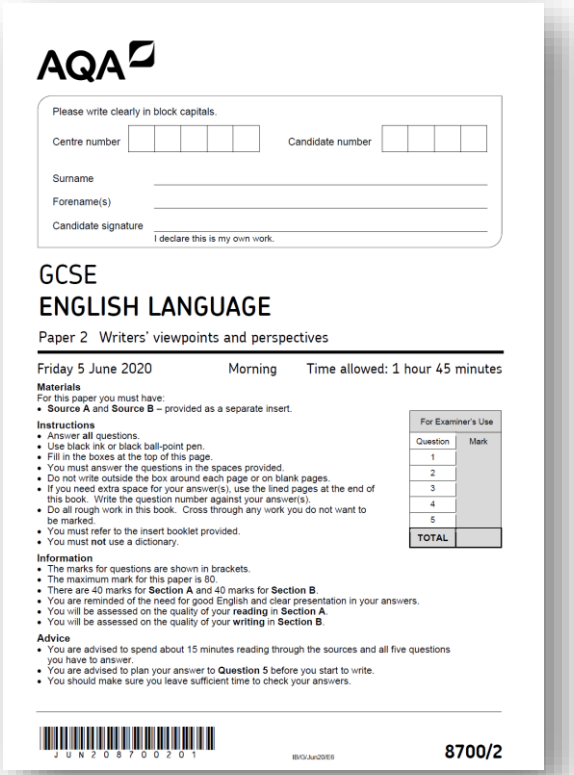
Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints And Perspectives (80 marks)

Two non-fiction texts

Section A: Four reading questions

Section B: One non-fiction task

Both papers 1 hour and 45 mins



AQA

Please write clearly in block capitals.

Centre number | Candidate number

Surname

Forename(s)

Candidate signature

I declare this is my own work.

GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Friday 5 June 2020 Morning Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:
- **Source A** and **Source B** – provided as a separate insert.

Instructions
- Answer **all** questions.
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes at the top of this page.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided.
- Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- If you need extra space for your answer(s), use the lined pages at the end of this book. Write the question number against your answer(s).
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- You must refer to the insert booklet provided.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

For Examiner's Use	
Question	Mark
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
TOTAL	

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for **Section A** and 40 marks for **Section B**.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **reading** in **Section A**.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **writing** in **Section B**.

Advice
- You are advised to spend about 15 minutes reading through the sources and all five questions you have to answer.
- You are advised to plan your answer to **Question 5** before you start to write.
- You should make sure you leave sufficient time to check your answers.

J U N 2 0 8 7 0 0 2 0 1

8700/2

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

GCSE English Language

Paper 1

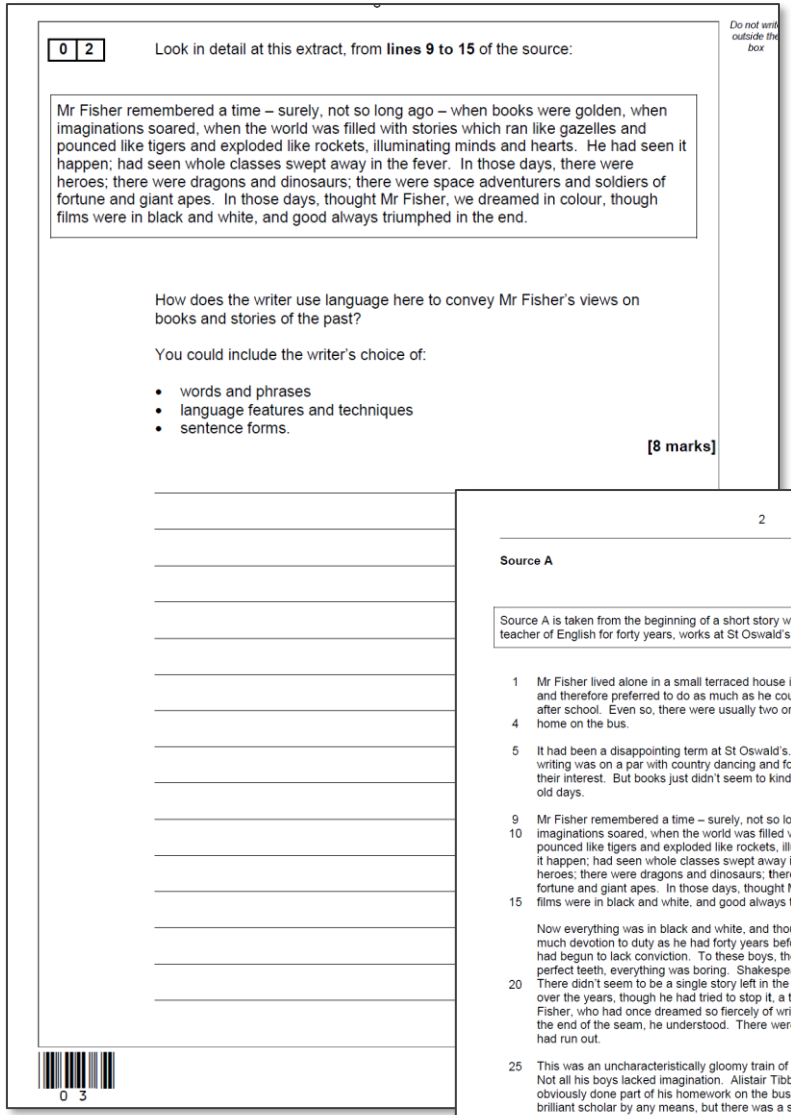
Q1. List four things 4 marks
Q2. Language 8 marks
Q3. Structure 8 marks
Q4. Evaluation 20 marks

Q5. Narrative or descriptive writing 24 + 16 marks

Paper 2

Q1. Four true statements 4 marks
Q2. Comparing and inference 8 marks
Q3. Language 12 marks
Q4. Comparing writers' views and methods 16 marks

Q5. Persuasive writing 24 + 16 marks



0 2 Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 9 to 15** of the source:

Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

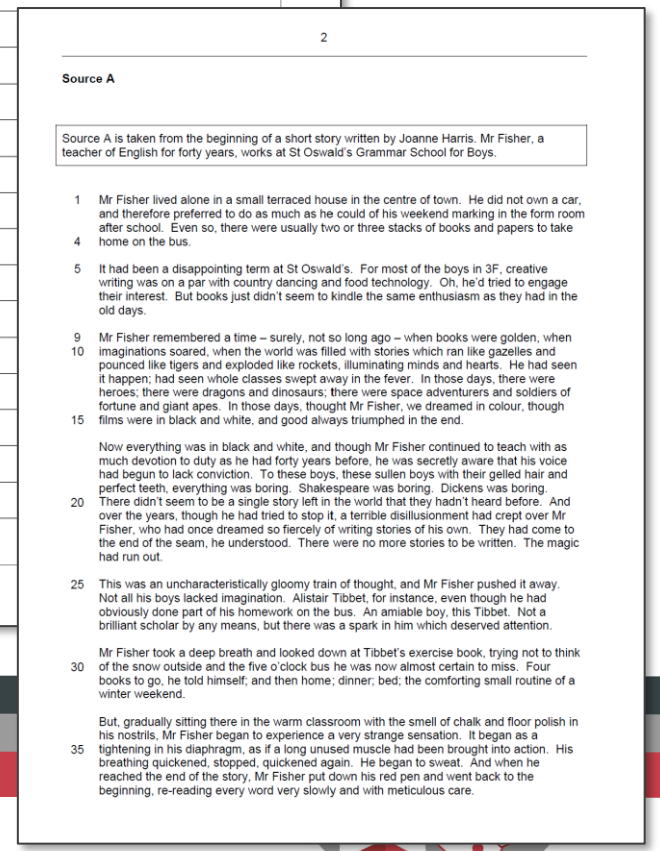
How does the writer use language here to convey Mr Fisher's views on books and stories of the past?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

0 3



2

Source A

Source A is taken from the beginning of a short story written by Joanne Harris. Mr Fisher, a teacher of English for forty years, works at St Oswald's Grammar School for Boys.

Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car, and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room after school. Even so, there were usually two or three stacks of books and papers to take home on the bus.

It had been a disappointing term at St Oswald's. For most of the boys in 3F, creative writing was on a par with country dancing and food technology. Oh, he'd tried to engage their interest. But books just didn't seem to kindle the same enthusiasm as they had in the old days.

Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

Now everything was in black and white, and though Mr Fisher continued to teach with as much devotion to duty as he had forty years before, he was secretly aware that his voice had begun to lack conviction. To these boys, these sullen boys with their gelled hair and perfect teeth, everything was boring. Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring. There didn't seem to be a single story left in the world that they hadn't heard before. And over the years, though he had tried to stop it, a terrible disillusionment had crept over Mr Fisher, who had once dreamed so fiercely of writing stories of his own. They had come to the end of the seam, he understood. There were no more stories to be written. The magic had run out.

This was an uncharacteristically gloomy train of thought, and Mr Fisher pushed it away. Not all his boys lacked imagination. Alistair Tibbet, for instance, even though he had obviously done part of his homework on the bus. An amiable boy, this Tibbet. Not a brilliant scholar by any means, but there was a spark in him which deserved attention.

Mr Fisher took a deep breath and looked down at Tibbet's exercise book, trying not to think of the snow outside and the five o'clock bus he was now almost certain to miss. Four books to go, he told himself; and then home; dinner; bed; the comforting small routine of a winter weekend.

But, gradually sitting there in the warm classroom with the smell of chalk and floor polish in his nostrils, Mr Fisher began to experience a very strange sensation. It began as a tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action. His breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again. He began to sweat. And when he reached the end of the story, Mr Fisher put down his red pen and went back to the beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care.

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

GCSE English Language

How do I achieve a Grade 5+?

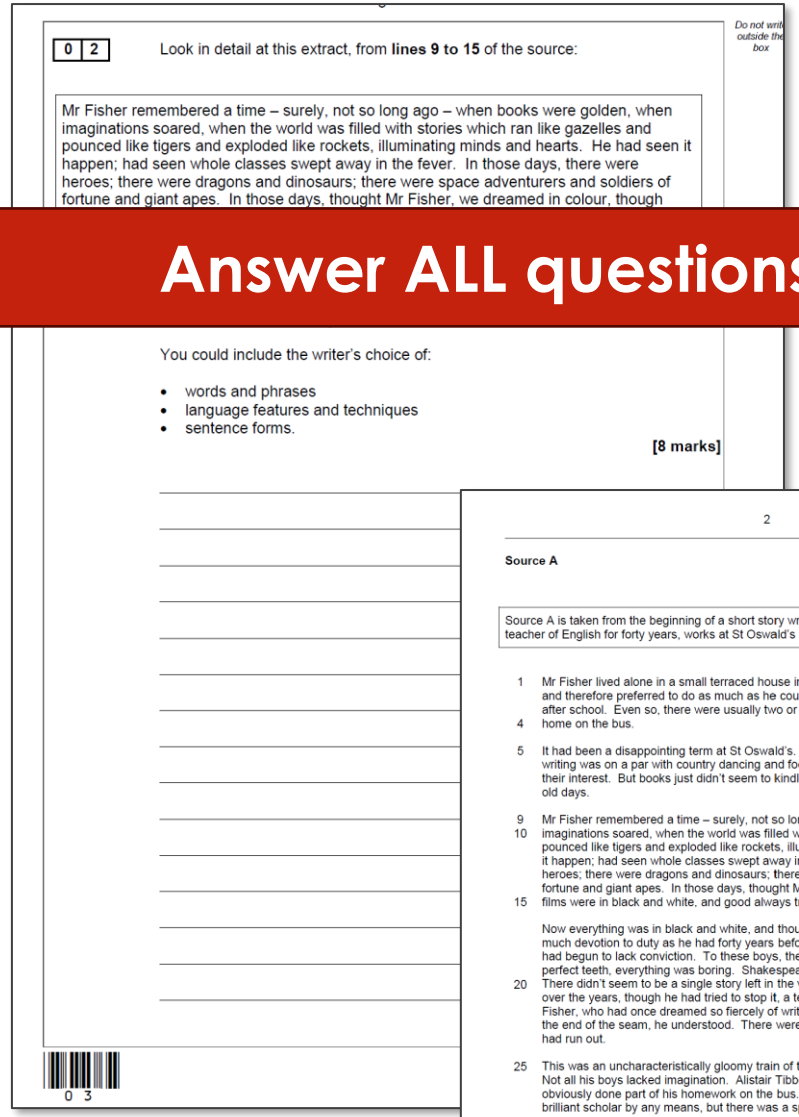
Section A

- **Clear answers** that show an understanding of the Source(s) and questions.
- A range of **references/quotations**.
- Clear use of **subject terminology**.
- **Focused analysis.**

Section B

- Clear and engaging **ideas** conveyed with a range of **vocabulary**.
- Mostly accurate **punctuation** and **spellings**.
- Range of **sentence forms**.

Answer ALL questions!



0 2 Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 9 to 15** of the source:

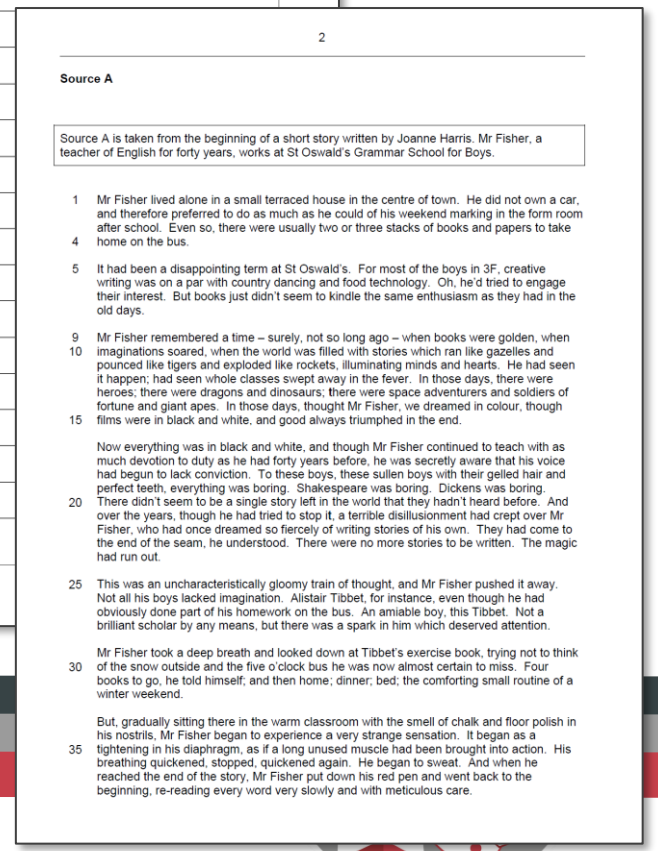
Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

0 3



2

Source A

Source A is taken from the beginning of a short story written by Joanne Harris. Mr Fisher, a teacher of English for forty years, works at St Oswald's Grammar School for Boys.

Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car, and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room after school. Even so, there were usually two or three stacks of books and papers to take home on the bus.

It had been a disappointing term at St Oswald's. For most of the boys in 3F, creative writing was on a par with country dancing and food technology. Oh, he'd tried to engage their interest. But books just didn't seem to kindle the same enthusiasm as they had in the old days.

Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

Now everything was in black and white, and though Mr Fisher continued to teach with as much devotion to duty as he had forty years before, he was secretly aware that his voice had begun to lack conviction. To these boys, these sullen boys with their gelled hair and perfect teeth, everything was boring. Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring. There didn't seem to be a single story left in the world that they hadn't heard before. And over the years, though he had tried to stop it, a terrible disillusionment had crept over Mr Fisher, who had once dreamed so fiercely of writing stories of his own. They had come to the end of the seam, he understood. There were no more stories to be written. The magic had run out.

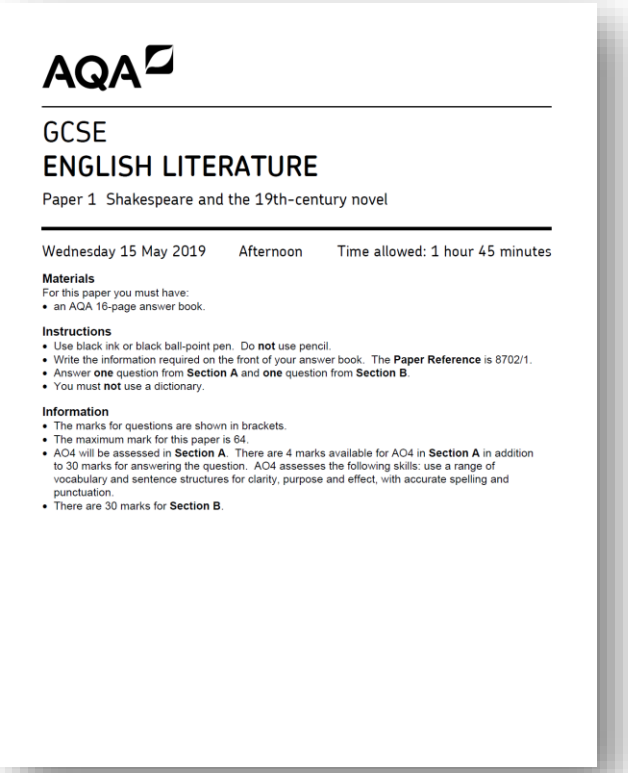
This was an uncharacteristically gloomy train of thought, and Mr Fisher pushed it away. Not all his boys lacked imagination. Alistair Tibbet, for instance, even though he had obviously done part of his homework on the bus. An amiable boy, this Tibbet. Not a brilliant scholar by any means, but there was a spark in him which deserved attention.

Mr Fisher took a deep breath and looked down at Tibbet's exercise book, trying not to think of the snow outside and the five o'clock bus he was now almost certain to miss. Four books to go, he told himself; and then home; dinner; bed; the comforting small routine of a winter weekend.

But, gradually sitting there in the warm classroom with the smell of chalk and floor polish in his nostrils, Mr Fisher began to experience a very strange sensation. It began as a tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action. His breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again. He began to sweat. And when he reached the end of the story, Mr Fisher put down his red pen and went back to the beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care.

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

GCSE English Literature AQA



AQA

GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 1 Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel

Wednesday 15 May 2019 Afternoon Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

Materials
For this paper you must have:
- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 8702/1.
- Answer **one** question from **Section A** and **one** question from **Section B**.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 64.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A**. There are 4 marks available for AO4 in **Section A** in addition to 30 marks for answering the question. AO4 assesses the following skills: use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section B**.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and Nineteenth Century Novel

Section A: Macbeth

Section B: A Christmas Carol

1 hour 45 minutes

Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry

Section A: An Inspector Calls

Section B: Power and Conflict poems

Section C: Analysis of one unseen poem and comparison of two unseen poems

2 hours 15 minutes (45 minutes on each section)

POLTAIR

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

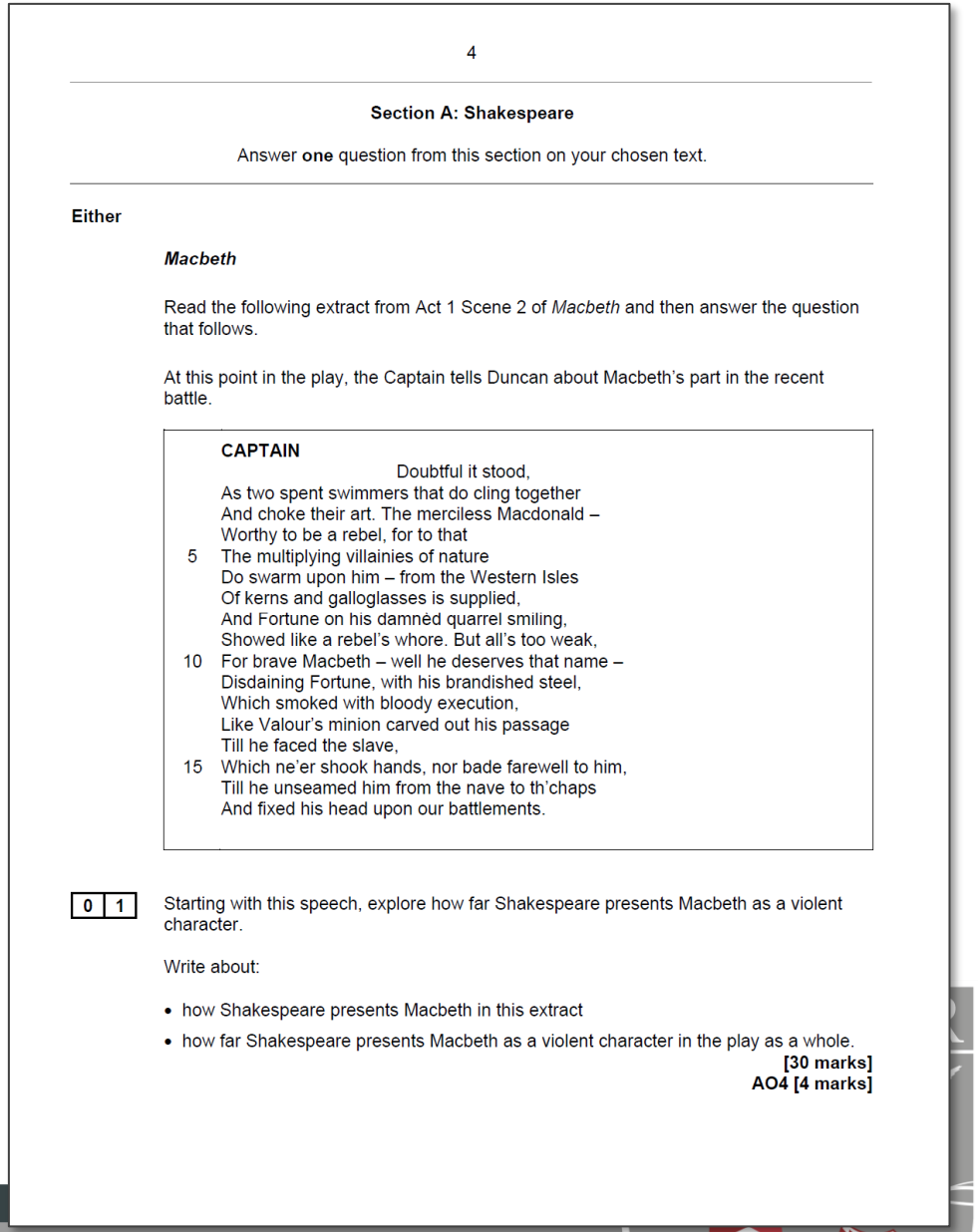
GCSE English Literature

Paper 1

Macbeth	30 marks + 4 SPaG marks
A Christmas Carol	30 marks

Paper 2

An Inspector Calls	30 marks + 4 SPaG marks
Power and Conflict Poetry	30 marks
Unseen Poetry	24 marks + 8 marks



4

Section A: Shakespeare

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

Either

Macbeth

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 2 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Captain tells Duncan about Macbeth's part in the recent battle.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonald –
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him – from the Western Isles
Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,
And Fortune on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak,
For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name –
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like Valour's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave,
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chaps
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

0 1 Starting with this speech, explore how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in this extract
- how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character in the play as a whole.

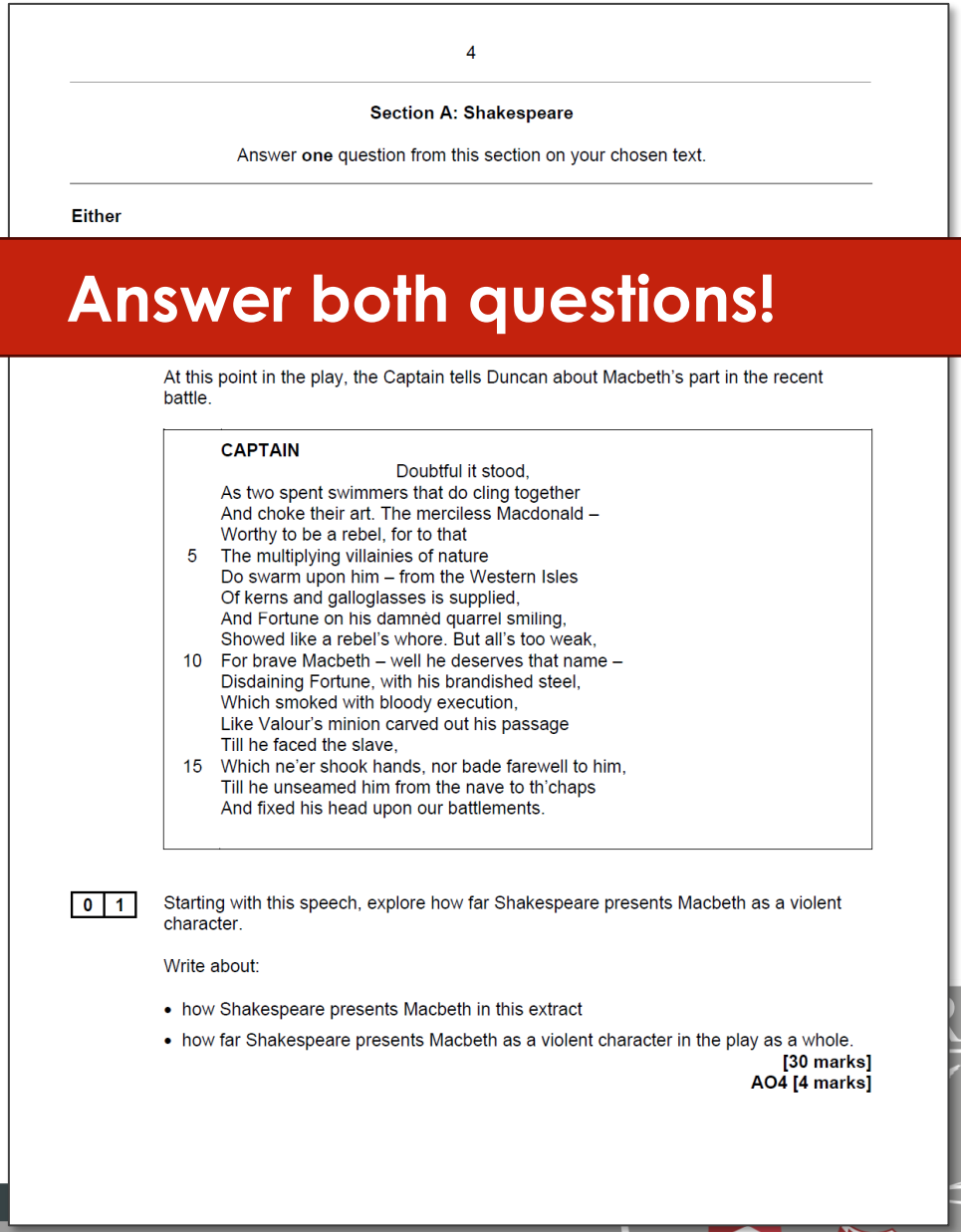
[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

GCSE English Literature

How do I achieve a Grade 5+?

- **Clear and focused answers**.
- Relevant **references** (including quotations) included throughout the response.
- Clear and accurate **analysis** of quotations.
- Correct **subject terminology**.
- **Context** and **'big ideas'** included in analysis.



4

Section A: Shakespeare

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

Either

Answer both questions!

At this point in the play, the Captain tells Duncan about Macbeth's part in the recent battle.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonald –
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him – from the Western Isles
Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,
And Fortune on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak,
For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name –
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like Valour's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave,
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chaps
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

0 1 Starting with this speech, explore how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in this extract
- how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a violent character in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Exam papers are available to read through in the Market Place.

The Poltair English Year 11 Team

11xE1	Mr Howson
11xE2	Miss Talbot
11xE3	Miss Owen
11xE4	Mrs Langton
11yE1	Mrs Potter
11yE2	Miss Allday
11yE3	Miss Talbot

Curriculum and Assessment

Studying **Macbeth**
Revising **A Christmas Carol**
Revising **Language Paper 1**

PPE1 window = 18/11/24 to 29/11/24

Studying the remaining **Power and Conflict Anthology** poems
Revising **Language Paper 2**
Revising **An Inspector Calls** and the **Power and Conflict Anthology**
Analysing and comparing **Unseen Poetry**

PPE2 window = 03/03/25 to 15/03/25

Revising **all sections of all papers** with a focus on **exam technique.**

GCSE exams

Assessment:

- ✓ 'Live' teacher feedback
- ✓ Peer and self-review using 'student friendly success criteria
- ✓ Knowledge checks
- ✓ Mid-cycle extended responses
- ✓ PPEs
- ✓ GCSE Exams

POLTAIR

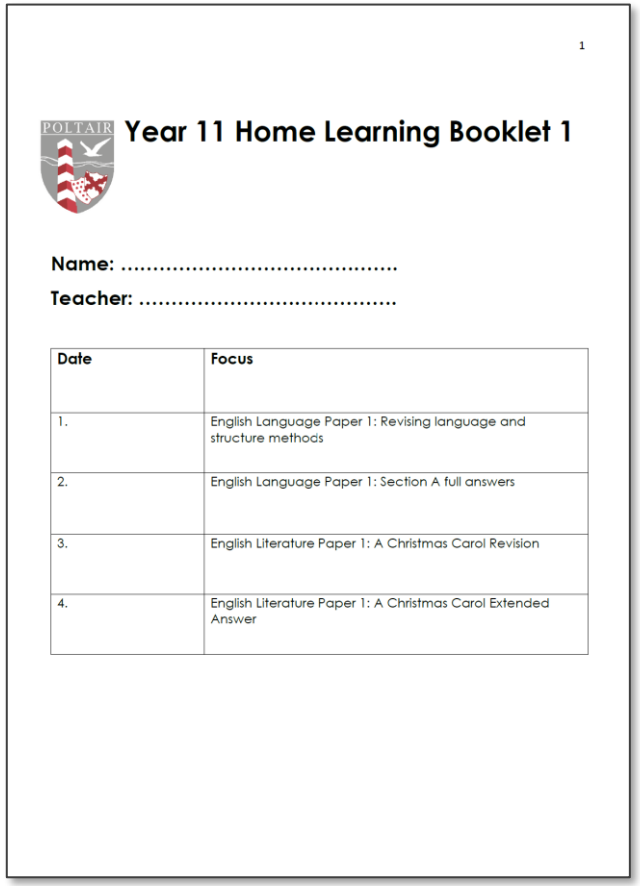
November PPEs

- Language Paper 1
- Literature Paper 1 (Macbeth and A Christmas Carol)

Home Learning

Weekly 60-minute tasks alternating between:

- Knowledge learning and quizzing
- Extended writing (exam questions)



1

POLTAIR

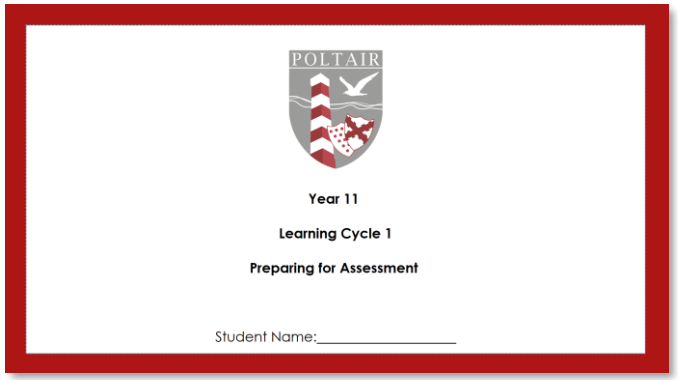
Year 11 Home Learning Booklet 1

Name: .....

Teacher: .....

Date	Focus
1.	English Language Paper 1: Revising language and structure methods
2.	English Language Paper 1: Section A full answers
3.	English Literature Paper 1: A Christmas Carol Revision
4.	English Literature Paper 1: A Christmas Carol Extended Answer

ClassCharts



POLTAIR

Year 11

Learning Cycle 1

Preparing for Assessment

Student Name:_____

POLTAIR

Extra-Curricular Support

Year 11 Challenge Lectures (Mr Howson)

Lecture-style sessions to provide students with knowledge required to achieve Grade 7+.

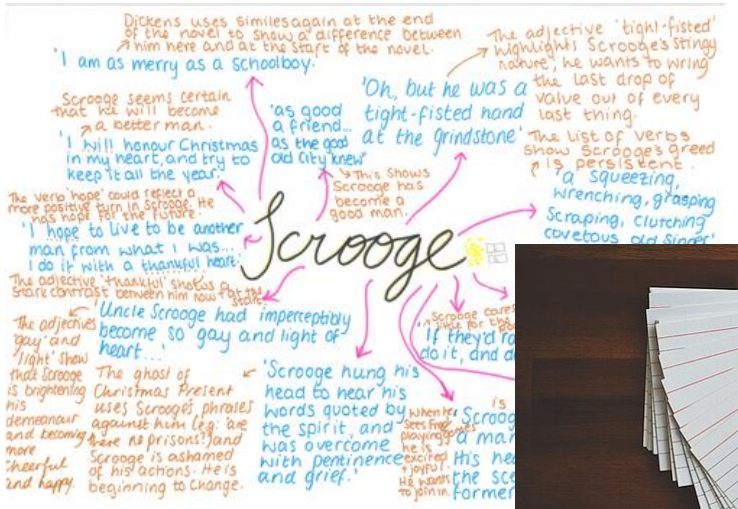
English Home Learning Drop-In Sessions (Miss Allday)

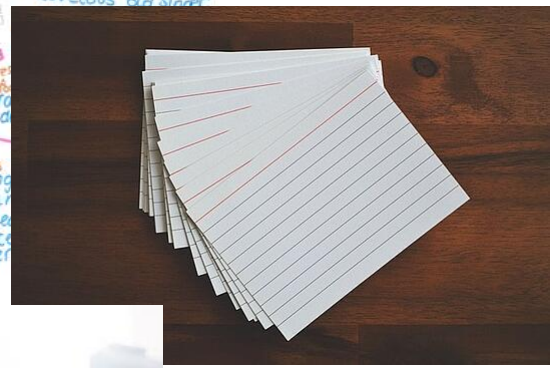
A member of the English team available in a classroom to support with home learning or independent study for English.

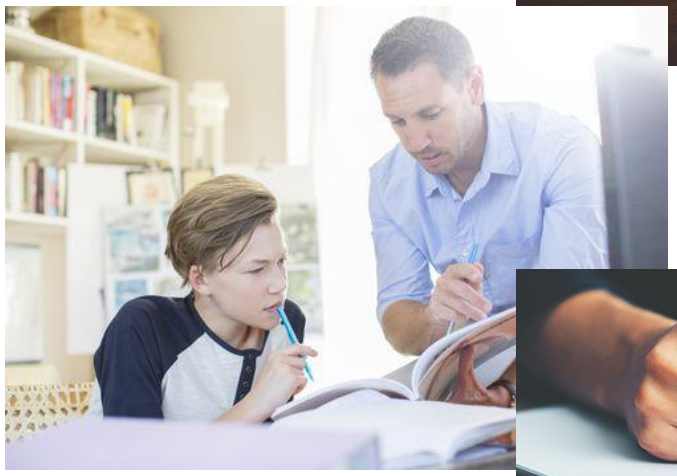
Small Group Intervention (Mrs Potter, Miss Talbot, Miss Langton, Miss Owen)

Invite-only, targeted sessions providing small group intervention based on needs identified following review of most recent assessment data.

Active Revision







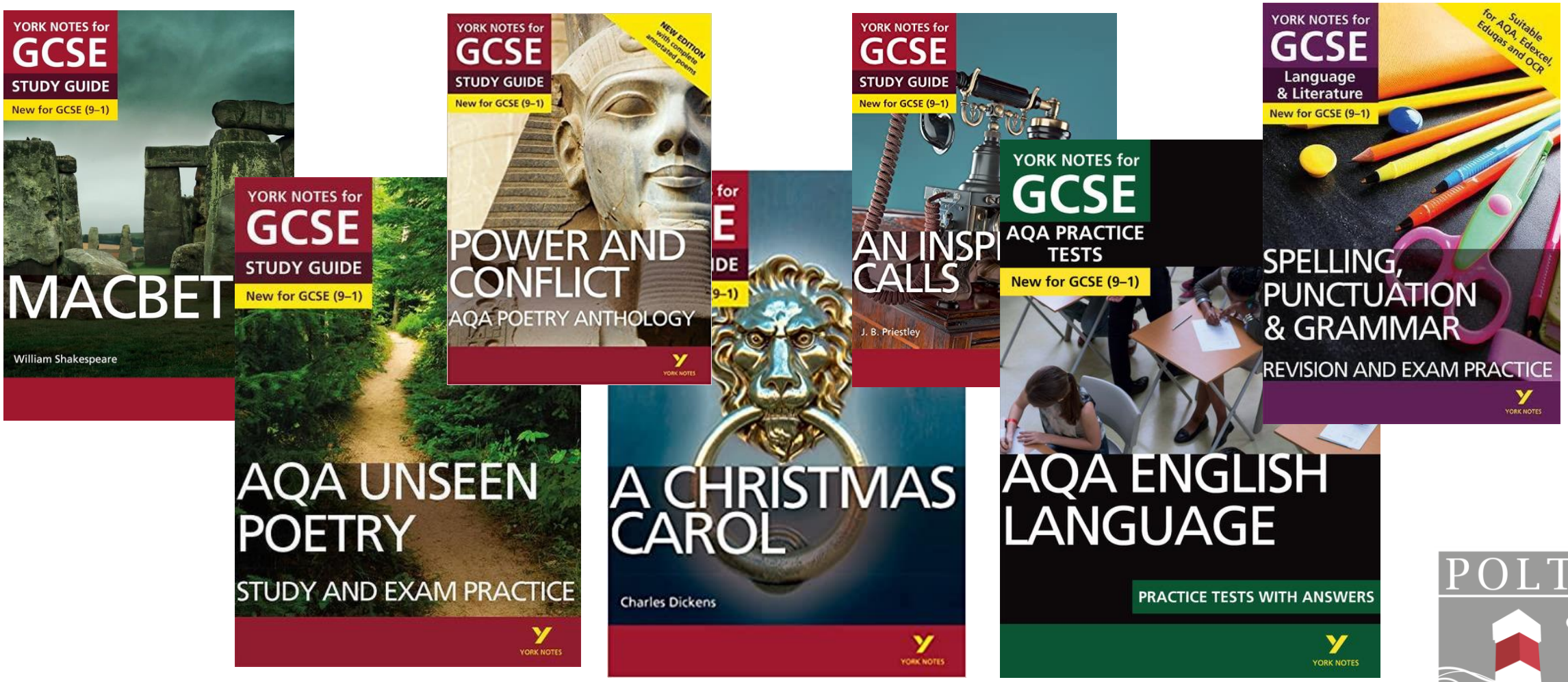
At Poltair we SORT it!

How can I revise for GCSE English?

S - Select	O - Organise	R - Recall	T – Test
Select a **paper or question** by reviewing your **PLCs** or **assessment feedback** to identify target areas for improvement.	**Find**: ✓ Home learning booklet ✓ Past papers ✓ Example answers ✓ Knowledge Organiser pages ✓ Student-friendly success criteria ✓ Recommended revision videos, podcasts and/or online resources ✓ Class notes **Make**: ✓ Flash cards ✓ Mind-maps ✓ Cornell notes	**Self-test (look, cover, write, check) or recall key information** with the help of family and friends. **Practise writing descriptions/ narratives or thesis introductions** following the structure and content you have developed in class. **Complete grammar activities** to improve your technical accuracy (SPaG).	**Practise exam questions** in timed conditions, seek feedback and answer them again to improve.

POLTAIR

How can I revise for GCSE English?



POLTAIR

ANY QUESTIONS?